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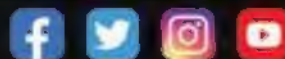
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On the Cover: Haynes King and Zach Calzada display their talents in front of the 12th Man, as they battle for next season's starting job. Photos by Rob Havens '88

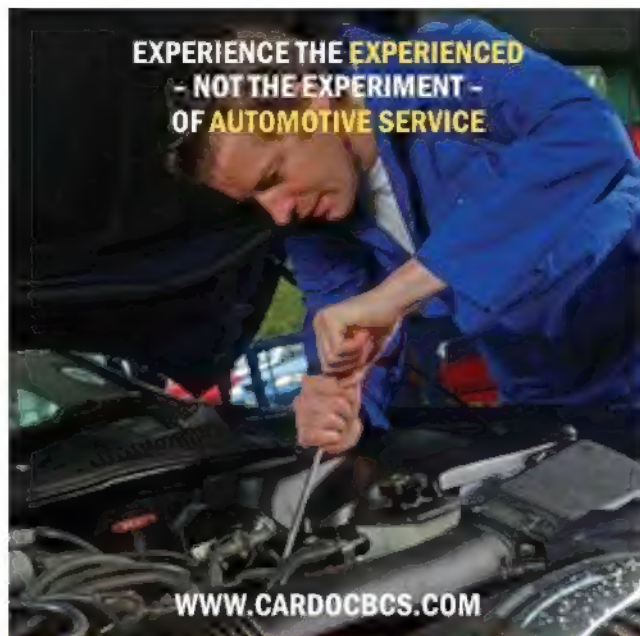
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Howdy Ags!

As we approach the end of the 20-21 athletics season, I couldn't help but reflect on the things we have experienced over the last 10 months. I have always tried to be a "the glass is half full" kind of guy so lets review the positives of the last year. Last summer we weren't sure if we would have a college football season. And if we didn't have football, chances are we wouldn't have sports. So I'm very thankful for all of the folks that made that happen. There were lots of sacrifices made by the players and coaches and staff that allowed us to have Aggie football, which in turn allowed us to have all of our sports. During the last ten months, I have been so impressed with all of the student athletes I have gotten to interview. I asked them all about COVID-19 and how it had affected them, and they all had such a great attitudes. Typically they said yeah it stinks but you just adjust and move on. I think that is why we have such great programs. Back when I was going to school, those that didn't buy into the traditions and the things that made this university so great were called 2 percenters. In 20 years, we may look back and recall "the opt outs" as the 2 percenters of this generation. Active coaches can't really express their true feelings about opting out because they might experience the fall out that it would bring. Which is why I found it interesting that one of the greatest basketball coaches of all time, Roy Williams, expressed his disdain for the term in his retirement speech "In today's times, I should say that I'm not retiring or resigning, I'm opting out," Williams quipped at his press conference. "That's the most ridiculous phrase I've ever heard in my life. Why the hell don't you just say 'I quit'? So I'm old-school and can't use those words." I have to agree with Roy. But instead of mentioning those that quit, I want to thank those that didn't! Thank you for having a swab shoved up your nose all the time. Thank you for not going out with your friends to stay safe. Thank you for not going home to see your families. Thank you for not hugging your loved ones to stay safe. Thank you for wearing a mask and following protocols. Thank you for making good grades and staying eligible. Thank you for giving it all you had during practices and on the field of play. Thank you for not opting out! Thank you for following through with your commitment to this university! Whether you won or the clock ran out I cheered for you because

I knew how much you gave on and off the playing surface and in case you haven't heard it, I speak for all of the 12thMan to say We Thank You!!!

Gig'em Ags!

Rob '88



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PROUD AGGIE MOM

snapshot



...elite penalty kick

Freshman Laney Carroll celebrates her winning p.k. in the fifth round of the shootout over Oklahoma State that propelled the Aggies into the Elite Eight of the NCAA Tournament. The Ags battled against the Cowgirls for 90 minutes of regulation and two overtimes, ending the contest in a 3-3 draw that set up the shootout. After Okie State missed their final penalty kick, Carroll calmly stepped up and drove the shot into the left side of the goal, clinching the 4-3 win for the Aggies.

Photo by Reagan Lunn courtesy of Aggie Athletics







...buzzer beater

Jordan Nixon is mobbed by her teammates after sinking a clutch jumper that bounced on the rim and fell in as time expired, giving the Aggies a 84-82 win over Iowa State in the second round of the NCAA Tournament. After collecting a blocked shot by Ciera Johnson with seven seconds to play, Nixon drove the length of the court and put up the shot off the glass to win the game. Photo courtesy of NCAA Photos



...welcome home johnny

The 12thMan got a treat at halftime of the Maroon & White Game as Johnny Manziel played all-time quarterback for both sides in the Aggie Legends Flag Football Game. All eyes at Kyle were on its favorite son as he showed he can still spin the ball in the "House that Johnny Built." Legends young and old were excited to catch passes from the Heisman winner. Photos by Rob Havens '88







[EQUESTRIAN] The team suffered a heart-breaking loss to #2 seed Georgia in the SEC Championship Semifinal 10-10 (2226.3-2176.3). They rebounded to defeat #8 South Carolina in the consolation meet. The ladies wrapped up their 2021 season with another tiebreaking loss in the NCEA Championship Quarterfinals against SMU 7-7 (3698.5-3693.5).

[BASEBALL] At press time the Aggie Baseball team has a 29-25 record and is still battling for a spot in the SEC tournament and a possible NCAA bid. It has been an up and down season for the Aggies. They beat #8 tu at Bluebell Park 12-0, and also won two out of three from #11 Ole Miss the first weekend in May. They won their first ever game in Globe Life Park in comeback fashion and last night they took care of their arch nemesis LSU 2-1 in game one. The SEC Baseball gauntlet is the toughest in college baseball, and the Ags currently sit at 9-19 in the league. They did reach the 20 win nonconference goal that they set, but we will have to see how the rest of the season plays out.



scoreboard

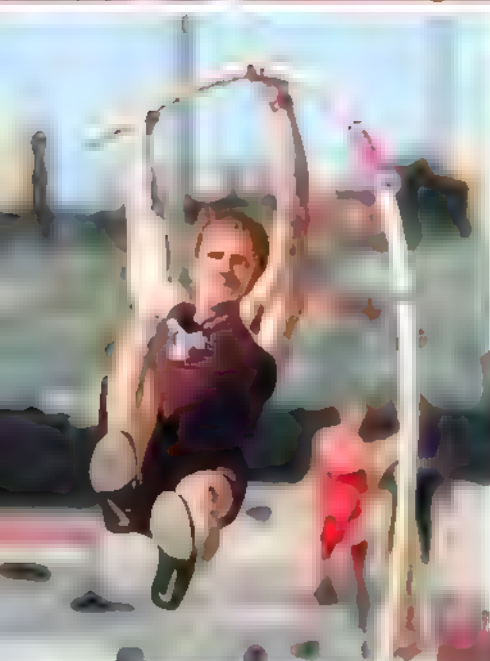


[VOLLEYBALL] The ladies wrapped up their split season with a 9-9 record. After a promising 5-0 start to begin the spring, they finished the season on a five game skid and didn't earn a bid into the NCAA Tournament. After the final match, Coach Bird said "we have to really focus on growing as a group along with that competitive chemistry to be consistent."

[MEN'S TENNIS] The #8 men's tennis team had an outstanding year. They were 19-9 overall with a 7-5 conference record. They defeated #14 Kentucky in the quarterfinals of the SEC Tournament and came up just short against #1 seed Florida 3-4 in the semi-finals. They hosted the first two rounds of the NCAA tournament and beat New Mexico and Oklahoma 4-1 to advance to the Sweet 16. In the third round, they took care of SEC rival Mississippi State with a sweep 4-0. For all of their efforts, the Aggies earned a third match against #2 Florida in the Elite 8. The Aggies battled hard and won the doubles point, but the Gators were just a little better on that day and defeated Texas A&M 1-4.

[WOMEN'S TENNIS] In what can definitely be called the most challenging campaign in program history, our ladies proved they were more than conquerors. They had a 21-8 overall record and 9-4 tally in the SEC. They defeated Auburn and South Carolina to earn their first trip into the championship match of the SEC tournament. #2 Georgia proved to be too much that day, as they took a 4-0 match win over the Aggies. The team rebounded from a tough loss by making it all the way to the Sweet 16 of the NCAA tournament. They beat Drake and #21 Northwestern to get to Orlando and play #7 Florida St in their final match of the season. The ladies fought hard but came up short 4-2.



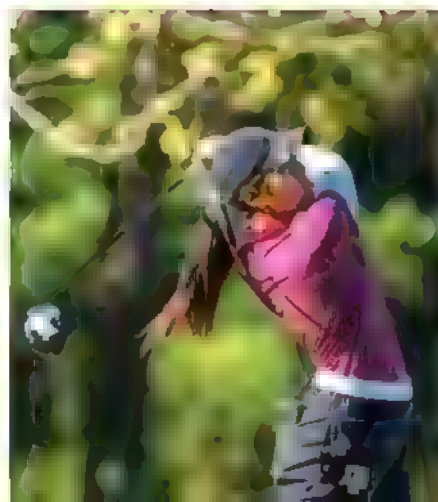


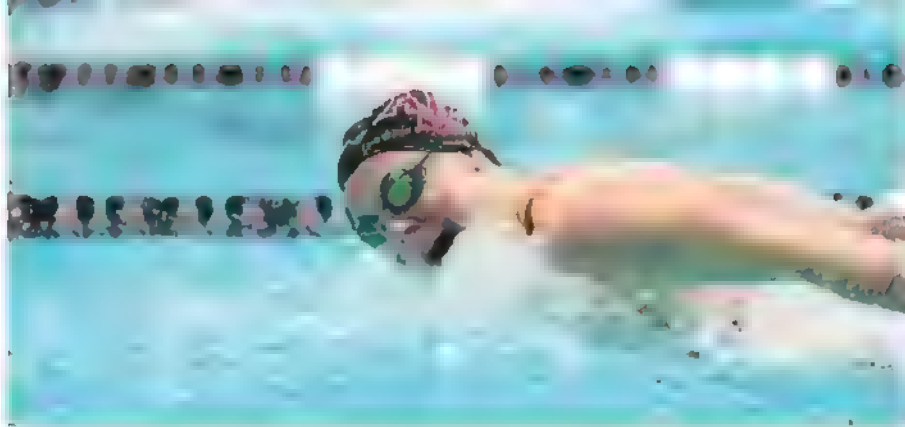
[TRACK & FIELD] Texas A&M got to host their first SEC Championship at the new E.B. Cushing Stadium. The Ags claimed seven titles: Deborah Acquah (long jump), Tyra Gittens (heptathlon), Moitalel Mpoke (400m Hurdles), Brandon Miller (800m), Athing Mu (400m, 4x400m), Tierra Robinson-Jones (4x400m), Charokee Young (4x400m) and Jaevin Reed (4x400m). Athing Mu set an American U-20 record of 49.84 in the 400, which was an SEC record, facility record and Texas A&M record. Her time made her the third fastest collegian all-time and ranks fifth on the all-time world U-20 list. The men tied for sixth place at the meet while the women finished in 4th place.

[MEN'S GOLF] The men had a furious rally to earn the last qualifying spot into the match play portion of the SEC Championship. They made up eight strokes in the final round. The Aggies continued their hot streak by upsetting the #1 seed Georgia to advance to the semifinals. They battled hard against Arkansas but came up just short. In the NCAA tournament, only the top 5 from the Regional advance to the championship round. The Aggies finished just one stroke away in sixth place.



[WOMEN'S GOLF] On April 20th Ross Bjork announced that Andrea Gaston would be replaced as head coach. A national search is still underway for the new coach. The Aggies finished 11th at the SEC Championship, which was its best finish under Gaston. Senior Courtney Dow received an individual bid to the NCAA Tournament in Baton Rouge, but due to poor weather and the course conditions it was cancelled, ending her season.

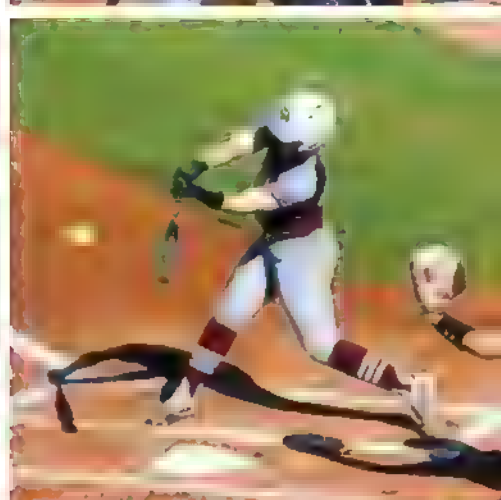




[SOFTBALL] The softball SEC gauntlet is one of the toughest as well, but Coach Evans and his squad earned their 19th consecutive appearance into the NCAA tournament. They wrapped up their regular season with a 31-21 record and an 8-16 SEC mark. The season was highlight by a win over #12 LSU and a sweep of #23 South Carolina. The girls had a tough nine inning loss to Tennessee in the SEC Tournament but still got an at large birth into the Big Dance. They will play #23 Wichita State in the first game. #1 Overall Seed Oklahoma is the top seed in the regional, and the Aggies are anxious to prove that they are giant killers the first weekend of the tourney.



[SWIMMING & DIVING] Junior Shaine Casas made three trips to the podium as he led the men's team to a fourth place finish at the SEC Championships. He also was awarded the Commissioner's Trophy for the second year in a row. Taylor Pike earned a silver and bronze medal to her collection as she led the women to a sixth place finish at the SEC Championships. The ladies earned a respectable 14th place at the NCAA's, while the men's team had their best finish ever with a 10th place finish. Casas earned three individual titles in a historic week for the junior swimmer.



[WOMEN'S BASKETBALL] After winning the SEC regular season championship on their home floor, the Aggies earned a #2 ranking in the final poll. They defeated LSU in the quarterfinals of the SEC tournament, but fell to #16 Georgia in the Semifinals. As a result, the Selection committee dropped us to a #2 seed for the NCAA Tournament. The Ags narrowly escaped an upset bid by Troy in the first round in Austin 84-80. The win set up a historic overtime victory in the second round over Iowa State. With the game tied and 7 seconds remaining, Jordan Nixon collected a blocked shot and took it the length of the floor before scoring the buzzer-beating basket for the 84-82 win in the Alamodome. The season came to an end in the Sweet 16 as a hot Arizona Wildcat team came out on top 74-59.



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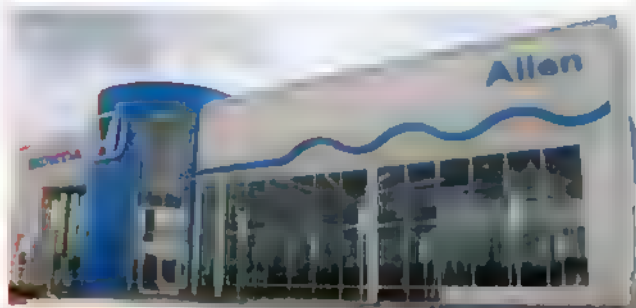
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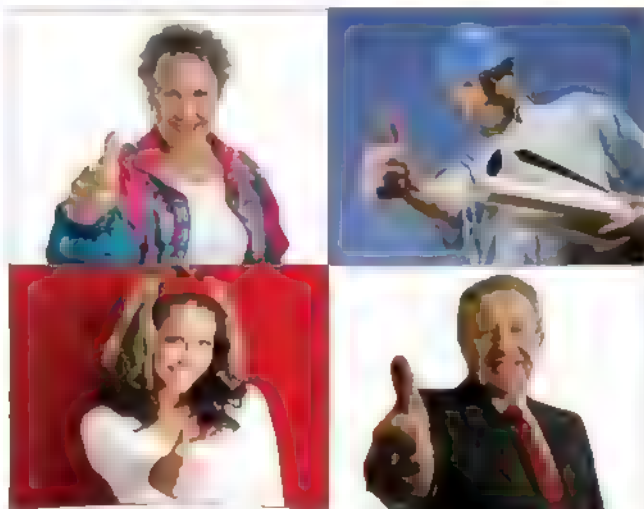
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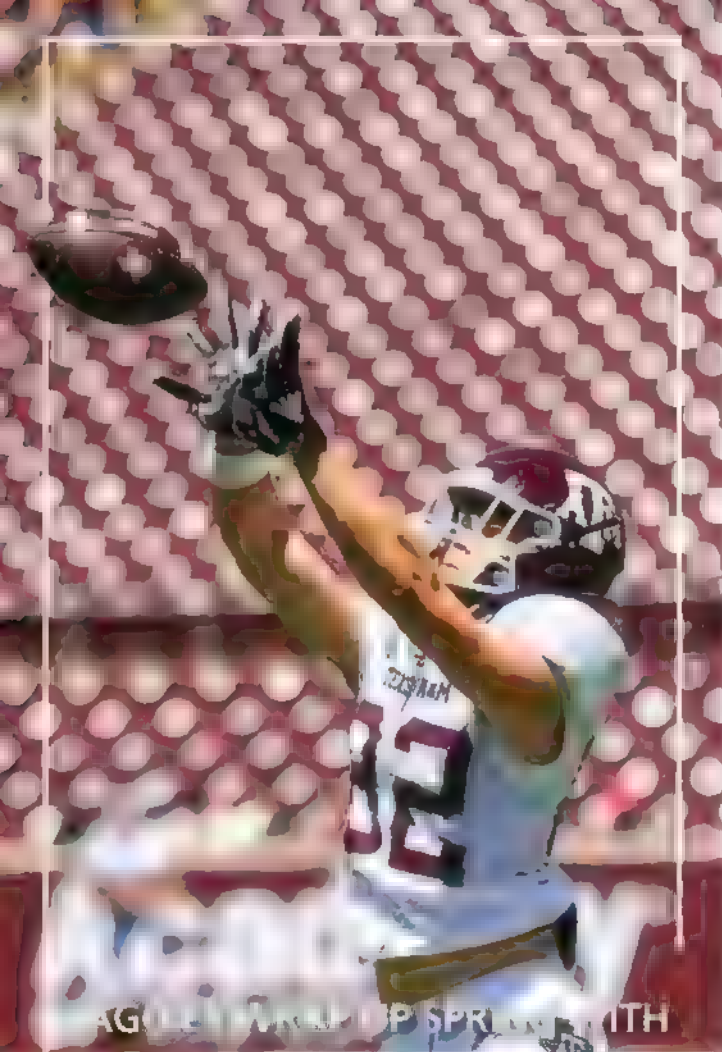
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The Aggies had their best year under Jimbo Fisher last year, finishing with a 9-1 record, an Orange Bowl Championship and a #4 ranking in the final poll of the season. Jimbo and his staff have been tearing it up on the recruiting trail, adding more talent and developing more depth.

The Maroon & White game gave us a peek at what we can look forward to this fall. Although there were a lot of players that we didn't get to see because of injury or safety precautions, it was still great to watch Aggie football on a beautiful spring day at Kyle Field.

Obviously, the biggest question going into the spring is who will be under center when the 2021 season kicks off. Fans got to see a healthy competition between the two front-runners: Haynes King and Zach Calzada. Both of them had a great showing during the scrimmage. In fact, SEC Network commentator Greg McElroy said it was an even race based on what he saw during the game.

Zach Calzada was 19-for-40 during the contest, throwing for 253 yards and a touchdown. Haynes King got banged up on a play and took less snaps during the game but still threw for 211 yards and a touchdown on 16-for-31 passing. King has been lauded for being one of the fastest players on the team and one of the best athletes. Calzada gets high marks for arm strength and an extra year of experience under Jimbo Fisher.

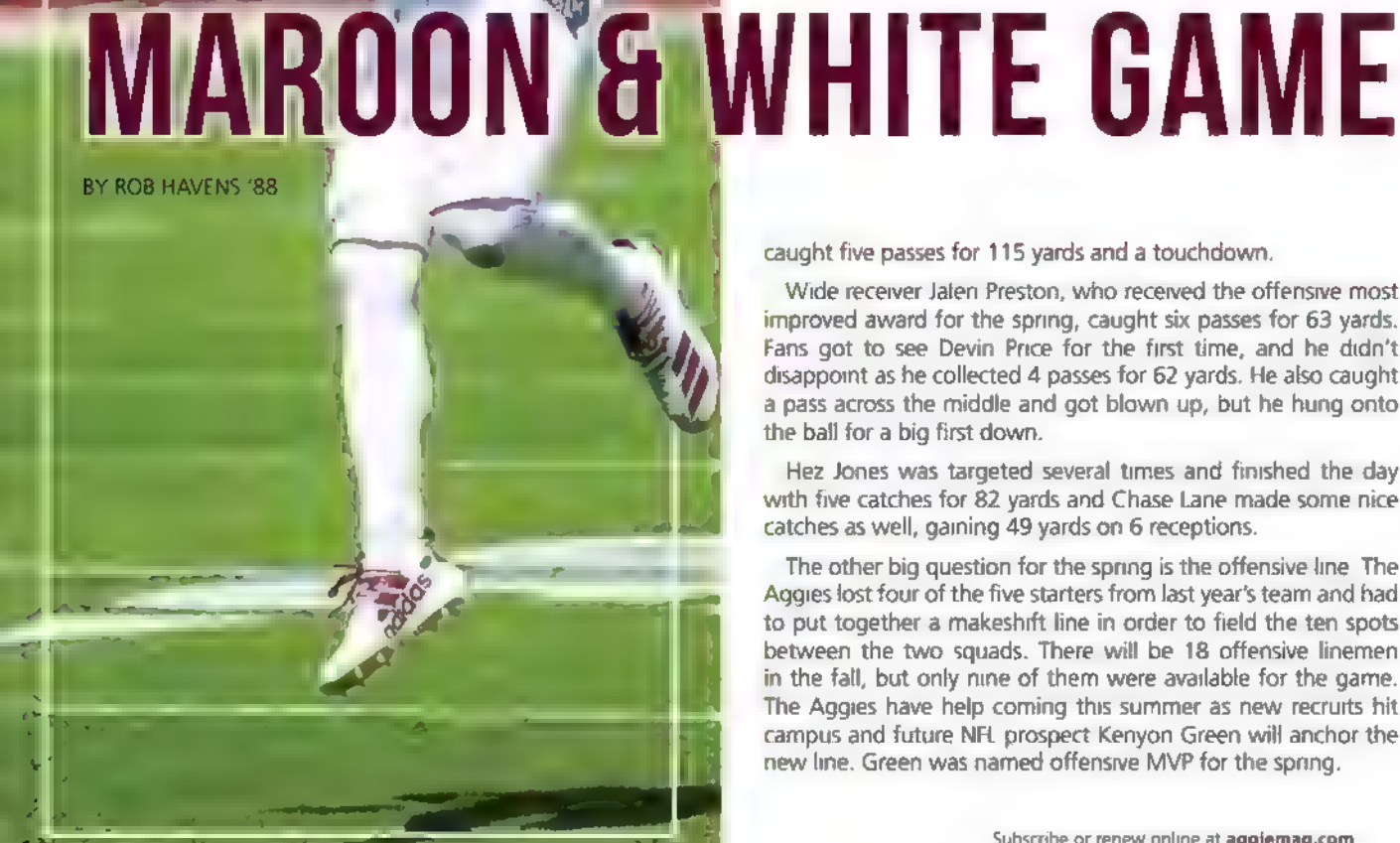
Both quarterbacks made excellent throws, and Jimbo was happy with their reads during the game and how they checked into the best play against the defenses that they faced. Anias Smith showed he is still the team's spark plug as he fires up the offense whenever he touches the ball. During the scrimmage he

caught five passes for 115 yards and a touchdown.

Wide receiver Jalen Preston, who received the offensive most improved award for the spring, caught six passes for 63 yards. Fans got to see Devin Price for the first time, and he didn't disappoint as he collected 4 passes for 62 yards. He also caught a pass across the middle and got blown up, but he hung onto the ball for a big first down.

Hez Jones was targeted several times and finished the day with five catches for 82 yards and Chase Lane made some nice catches as well, gaining 49 yards on 6 receptions.

The other big question for the spring is the offensive line. The Aggies lost four of the five starters from last year's team and had to put together a makeshift line in order to field the ten spots between the two squads. There will be 18 offensive linemen in the fall, but only nine of them were available for the game. The Aggies have help coming this summer as new recruits hit campus and future NFL prospect Kenyon Green will anchor the new line. Green was named offensive MVP for the spring.



AGGIES WRAP UP SPRING WITH

MAROON & WHITE GAME

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Isaiah Spiller will once again be the Aggies work horse in the backfield. With Devon Achane sharpening his track skills for Coach Pat Henry this spring, Earnest Crownover and Deondre Jackson got to show what they could do for the Aggie running game. Both young men will provide depth in the talented stable of running backs that Jimbo and his staff have assembled.

With Jalen Wydermyer and Baylor Cupp sidelined for the game, Max Wright took advantage of his playing time and punished a defender that tried to tackle him on one of his three catches for 35 yards.

With Buddy Johnson leaving for the NFL Coach Elko will be looking for a new leader in the center of his defense. One of the bright spots of the offseason was the announcement that Aaron Hansford would be returning for another season. He had five tackles for the Maroon squad. Edgerin Cooper, who led both teams with nine tackles, and Tarian Lee Jr. were both mentioned by name after the game by Coach Fisher as possible replacements for Johnson. Lee earned the defensive most improved award along with defensive lineman Isaiah Raikes.

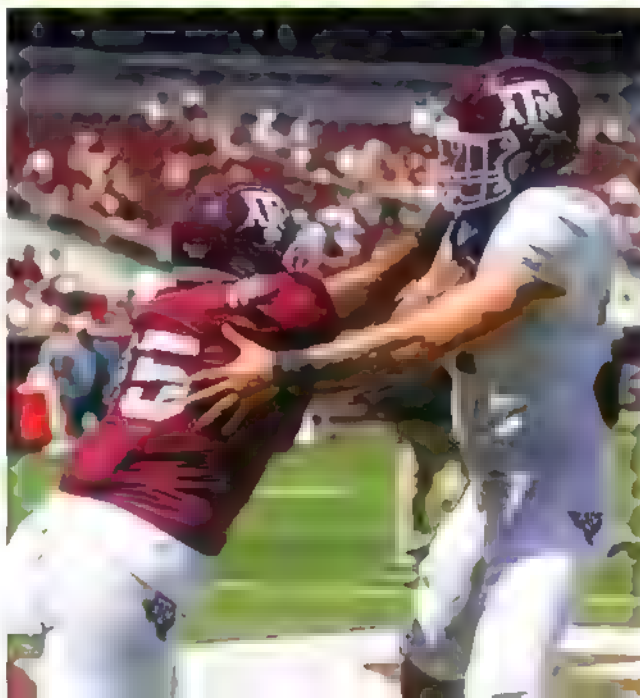
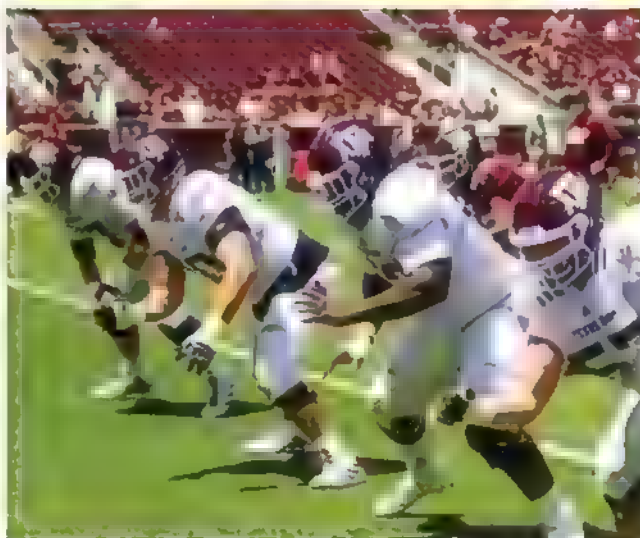
Demari Richardson had the play of the game for the defense as he intercepted a Zach Calzada pass and navigated his way all the way to the end zone. He was called down on the play when Calzada attempted to tackle him but explained after the scrimmage, that "There was no way that Zach's tackling me on that play." Junior Samuel Matthews also got an interception of a Haynes King pass during the scrimmage.

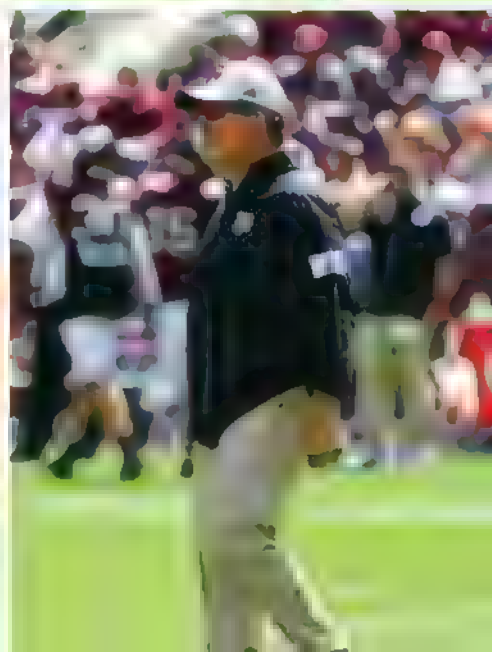
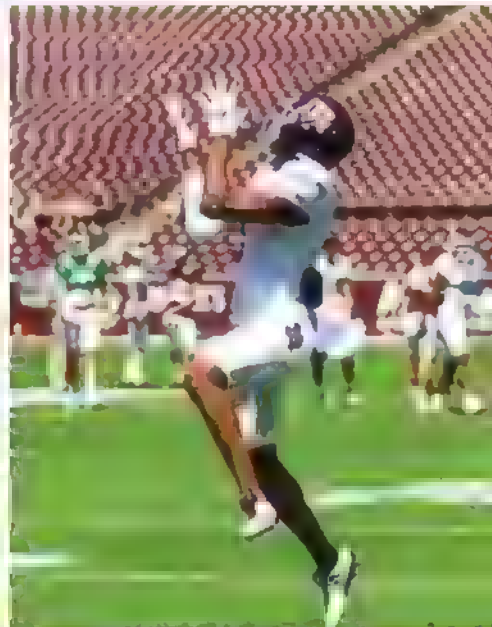
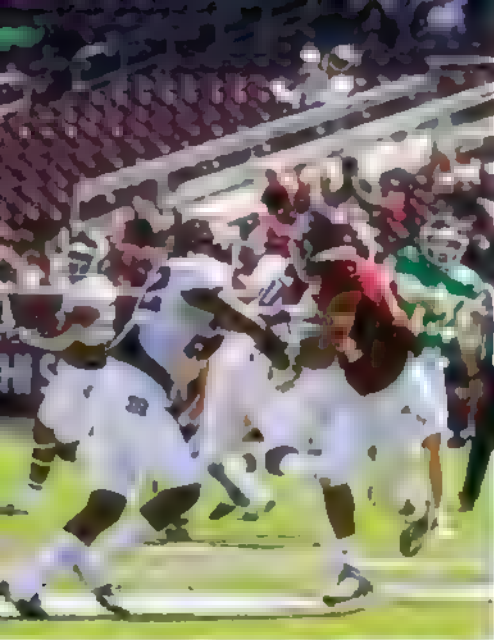
Defensive Back Antonio Johnson led the Maroon squad with five solo tackles and Brian Williams had a total of seven tackles for the white team.

A lot of young players got the opportunity to show what they could do on the defensive line during the scrimmage, but the Aggies will return veterans DeMarvin Leal, Jayden Peevy, Micheal Clemons and Tyree Johnson this fall. Leal and Clemons were named defensive MVP's for spring camp.

On special teams, veteran kicker Seth Small made a 31 and 37-yard field goal and Caden Davis made three, including a 51 and 55 yarder. Nik Constantinou hit a 47 and 42-yard punt and Alan Guernieri averaged 42.7 yards on three punts. Deep snapper Connor Choate earned MVP for special teams.

Although there were several players out, both teams were able to move the ball up and down the field. King and Calzada both made impressive passes and seemed confident to lead the team. Both have a full summer and fall camp to separate themselves and win the team. Finishing fourth was great last year but the goal of Fisher and this team is to finish first. He's ready to make Texas A&M into a two-ring school, an Aggie Ring and a National Championship Ring! ■







LEGENDS GAME

BY ROB HAVENS '88

One of the highlights of the weekend was the Aggie Legends Flag Football game that took place at halftime. The crowd went wild as Heisman Winner Johnny Manziel was announced to play quarterback for both sides.

The goal is to come out without an injury, but when these guys hit the field, they can't help but play to win. Including class of '75 Carl Roaches who played for the Oilers and the Saints. Carl got things going as he caught a 23-yard pass from Johnny and log rolled into the end zone.

C-Mike (Christine Michael) got the crowd going after receiving a short touchdown pass and then celebrating with a round off into a backflip. He wasn't done yet, as he grabbed the mic from Will Johnson and shouted at the 12thMan.

Not to be out done, two-time Super

Bowl Champion Bethel Johnson caught a 25-yard touchdown in the flat and answered with a round off into a back flip of his own.

54-year old Jerry Fontenot got into the action on the next drive. Jerry played in the NFL in 3 different decades. He caught a short pass for a touchdown and then went old school and spiked it.

A little razzle dazzle on the next play as Dante Hall drew up a half back pass back to Johnny, but Sirr Parker tucked it and weaved his way into the end zone, bringing back memories of Dave South exclaiming "He got a touchdown, he got a touchdown, he got a touchdown!"

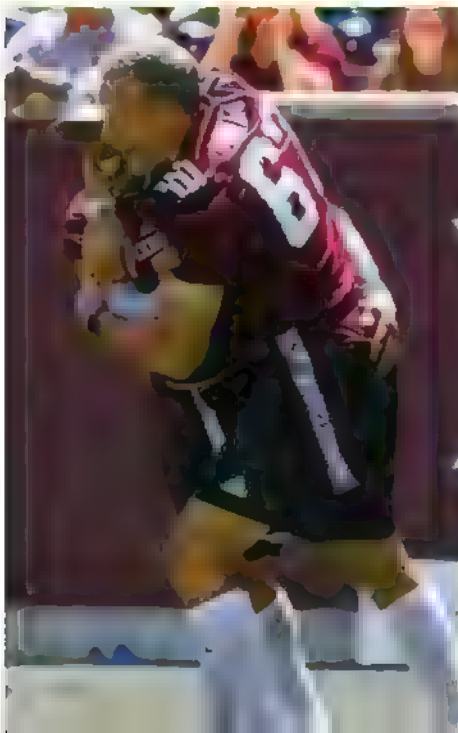
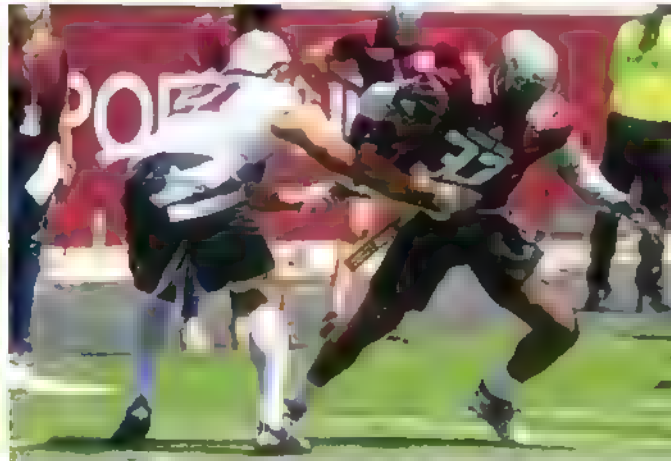
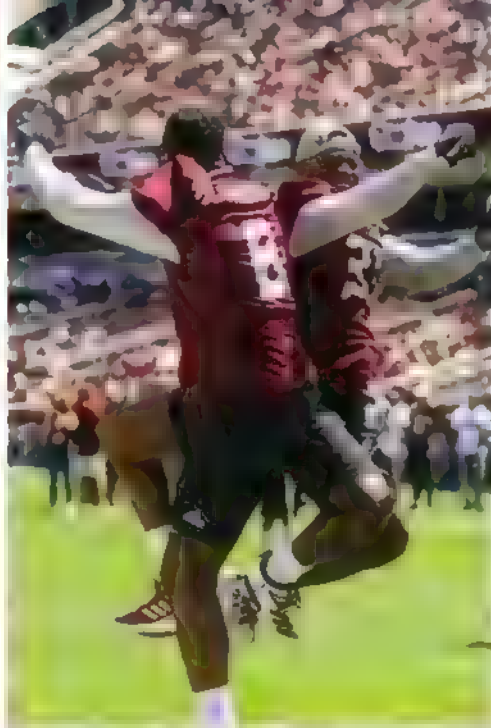
The defense finally made a play on the next drive as Floyd Raven broke in front of a Manziel pass but he was unable to collect it for an interception. He was still able to send a shout out to the 12thMan

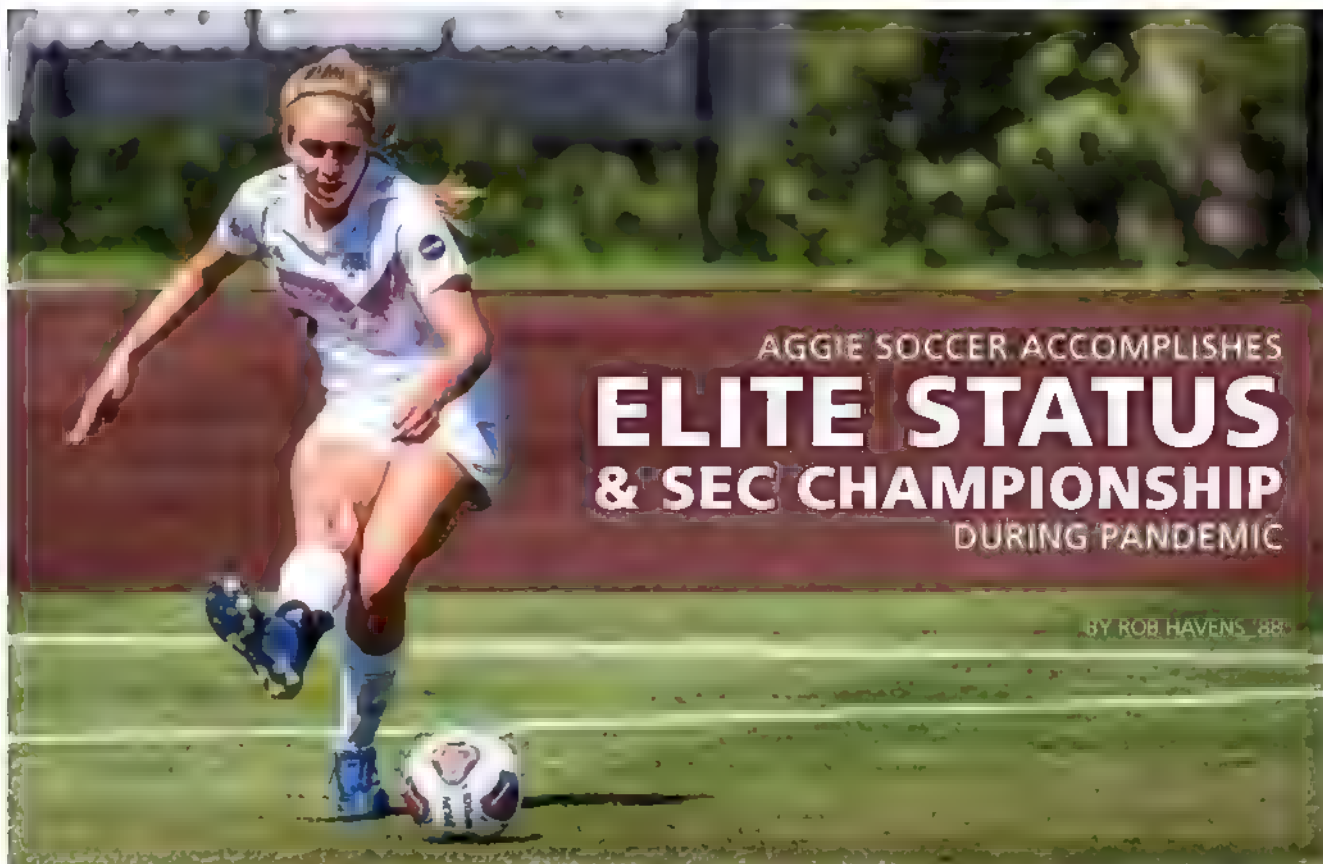
over the PA and plug his local coffee shop Last Shot Espresso.

C-Mike showed he still has some moves on the next possession as he collected a pass at the five, avoided his flag being pulled and stretched into the end zone for another score.

Bethel Johnson wrapped up the scoring for the day, as Johnny went airborne and fired the ball into the end zone for a 25-yard touchdown.

The lettermen's reunion allowed current NFL players such as Von Miller & Jake Matthews to return to College Station to hang out with over 40 former players and coaches like Ray Childress and Jackie Sherrill. It was an amazing event and so much fun to watch these guys performing again on Kyle Field. ■





AGGIE SOCCER ACCOMPLISHES **ELITE STATUS** & SEC CHAMPIONSHIP DURING PANDEMIC

BY ROB HAVENS '88



In what will easily be remembered as the most challenging season in Aggie Soccer history, our ladies and coaching staff once again proved to be one of the best soccer programs in the country. They compiled an 11-3 regular season record and earned a share of their third SEC regular-season title with a 7-1-0 record in conference play. The team also earned a bid to their 26th consecutive Division I Women's Soccer Championship

Not only did this team have to adhere to all of the COVID-19 protocols and navigate their way through a stoppage in play due to a false positive test, they also lost two of their captains during the semester break. Jimena Lopez and Addie McCain turned pro, and the Aggies had to figure out a way to win matches without two of their best players.

The young squad only lost one game in the spring and finished off the regular season with a huge victory over #3 TCU that propelled them into the #7 overall seed in the NCAA tournament and a first round bye.

The Aggies travelled to Greensboro, North Carolina for their second round match vs University of South Florida. The pesky Bulls gave the Aggies all they could handle in the first half, and neither team was able to score a goal. Early in the second half, Lauren Geczik was fouled in the penalty box, and the Aggies' Barb Oliveri made them pay as she buried the ice-breaker with a penalty kick. The play changed the whole momentum of the game, as the Aggies played with confidence and added some insurance in the 66th minute of the match. Taylor Pounds sent a long ball to the corner, and Laney Carroll outraced her defender to get and control the ball. Laney then sent a perfect crossing pass to Oliveri who one timed it to the back of the net, giving





the Aggies a 2-0 win.

The Aggies advanced to the Sweet 16 for the 16th time in program history. The Ags took on previous Big 12 rival Oklahoma State in the third round in Cary, North Carolina. Okie St scored first in the contest, but the Aggies were able to tie it just three minutes later when Taylor Ziemer got a rebound off of a Olivieri shot and poked it home for the tying score. Jai Smith hit a crossing shot to teammate Ali Russell who finished with a header to give the Ags a 2-1 advantage going into intermission.

Early in the second half the Pokes tied it up at two a piece at the 48-minute mark of the game and then took the lead 30 minutes later when Gabriella Coleman drove in the go-ahead goal.

Our girls did not hang their heads and just two minutes later tied up the match again when Taylor Pounds volleyed in a corner kick, making the score 3-3.

The Aggies earned a great advantage when Cowgirl Charm Morgan got her second yellow card just two minutes into the first overtime and was forced to exit the game, giving the Aggies a one-man advantage for the next 18 minutes. They peppered the Okie State goalie with 8 shots but weren't able to score the go-ahead goal. The game would be decided with a shootout.

Coach G substituted Jordan Burbank to be the Aggies' goalie for the shootout. Both teams made their goals in the first three rounds, as Ziemer, Olivieri and Daria Britton all found the back of the net. In the fourth round, both teams failed to score, and the pokes' Hannah Webb hit the post on her fifth-round kick to give the Aggies a chance to win the match.

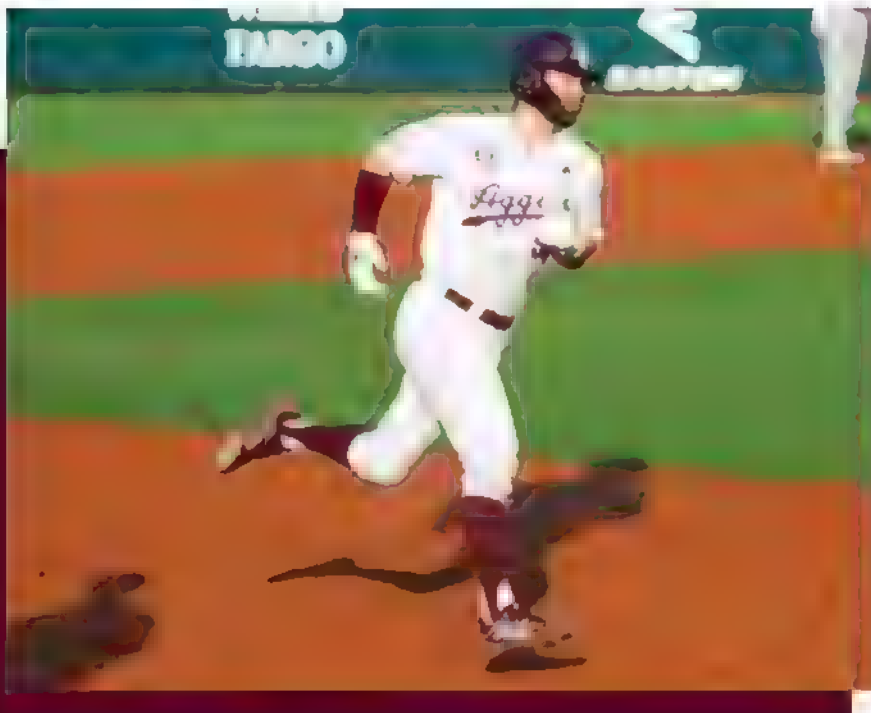
With ice in her veins, freshman Laney Carroll calmly approached her kick. Cowgirl goalie Emily Plotz guessed the wrong direction and Carroll drove the ball into the left side of the goal giving the Aggie a 4-3 win and setting off a celebration among her teammates and coaching staff on the field. As a result of the win, the Aggies earned only the seventh trip to the Elite Eight for the program.

With a trip to the College Cup Final Four on the line, the Aggies were matched against #2 North Carolina. Our ladies played their hearts out but came up just short as the Tar Heels scored the only goal of the game right before half, giving them a 1-0 lead at the intermission. In the second half, there were only three shot attempts by both clubs combined as the Heels spent most of the half milking away the clock.

What an amazing season these ladies had. They were resilient and overcame every obstacle that they had. They were one of the youngest teams in the country, but they gained so much great experience that this team will benefit from for years to come. They played a split season that lasted longer than any team has done in the past. We are so proud of their accomplishments and look forward to watching them again in August! ■



Q&A WITH WILL FRIZZELL



Q: YOU WERE NAMED NATIONAL PLAYER OF THE WEEK AFTER AN AMAZING WEEKEND. WHAT WERE YOUR FAVORITE MOMENTS?

A: The walk-off, that one was really cool. Just because it's my fourth year here, and that's the first time I've had Olsen Magic, like I've done it myself. I've been a part of it so many times, but I had never been the person to get the hit. And I had always wanted to, so that was really cool for me. The grand slam on Sunday was another one that was really cool because it was the fifth homerun of the week, and I've never done anything like that and it was the homerun to give us the lead. So that one was really cool as well.

Q: MICHAEL JORDAN WAS IN THE NBA FINALS ONE YEAR AND KEPT HITTING THREE POINTER AFTER THREE POINTER. HE JOGGED COMING BACK UP THE FLOOR AFTER HITTING ONE AND SHRUGGED HIS SHOULDERS BECAUSE HE WAS IN THE ZONE. WERE YOU JUST IN THE ZONE THIS LAST WEEKEND?

A: I mean, it was different for sure. I don't think I was seeing the ball any better than I had been seeing the ball. It was just that every time I went up there, every at bat, I thought I was going to hit a homerun. I'm not saying that when I normally go up there I'm not thinking I'm going to hit a homerun all the time, but it was just one of those things where I didn't think they could do anything to really get me out.

Q: COACH SEELY SAID THEY EXPECTED YOU TO DO THIS LAST YEAR IF THE SEASON HADN'T BEEN CUT SHORT. WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU COULD'VE DONE LAST YEAR?

A: I try not to think about that too much because I think that it was a year that was stolen from all of us. I felt like I was off to a good start. I feel like we had a really good lineup last year with Zach hitting three and I was hitting four and he was a really fun guy to hit behind. I felt like I had all the makings to have a really good year last year.

Q: TELL ME ABOUT YOUR INJURY, BATTLING BACK, AND WHAT IT HAS DONE FOR YOUR GAME.

A: It's something I dealt with through high school and then getting here, I felt really good my freshman year, but I just had a

false step one game when I was in the outfield and I kind of felt off. I got it checked out, turned out I needed a surgery after my freshman year just to kind of clean it up. But that surgery didn't work, so I played my sophomore year hurt, knowing that I was going to have to get surgery after. I had that surgery, and that fall was a really weird one for me because I couldn't play. It was a real surreal situation for me because all my friends were getting to play – they were all having fun, doing really well – and I was a coach for the most part, a coach for the first basemen. We had a lot of new guys come in. It was a pretty new team last year, so a lot of guys had never seen me play or anything like that so that fall was really tough on me and it made me want to play that much more. It really grew my love for the game. Going through rehab – and it was a tough rehab – going through all that and just kind of putting my head down and doing whatever it took to get back on the field. I just wanted it so bad to get back there and play with all my friends, all my great teammates.

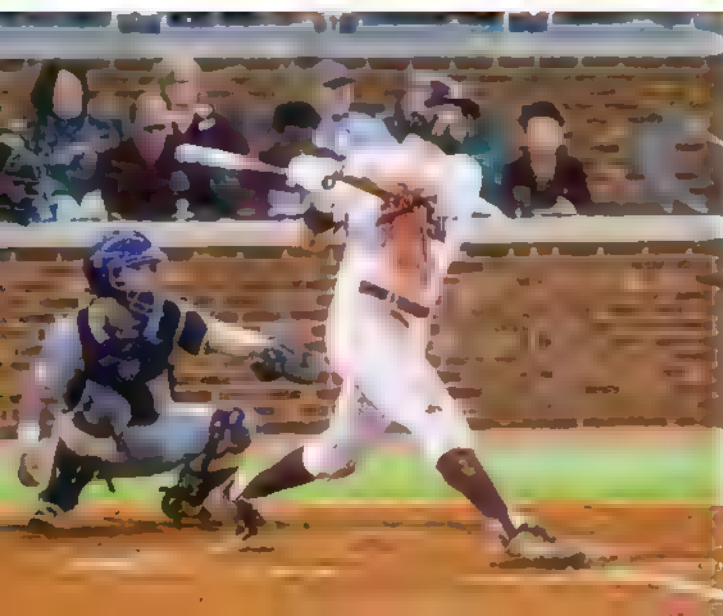
Q: COACH CHILDRESS, IN EXPLAINING HOW GREAT IT WAS TO SEE YOU HAVE SUCCESS, MENTIONED YOU BEING A GUY THAT SHOULDN'T EVEN BE OUT THERE BECAUSE OF HOW BAD THE INJURY WAS. DID SOME FOLKS DOUBT THAT YOU WOULDN'T MAKE IT BACK?

A: Yeah, it was a different one for sure, but I don't think I ever really doubted myself, that I was going to be able to comeback except for one time. It was just like a bad day, kind of doubting myself. I don't even know if Chandler Jozwiak knows it but we were all sitting in our living room, because I lived with Chandler, Christian Roa and Mikey Hoehner, all sitting there talking about baseball and it had kind of been a long day for me. I had a bad day of rehab where I didn't make the progress that I wanted to make, and Chandler kind of made the comment about rooming together on the road. It was the first day that it had kind of crept into my mind that I might not travel because we had so many guys come in. I was thinking like maybe I won't be able to play this year, who knows, and Chandler just casually was like, yeah we will room together on the road and I was like yeah I guess we will, that kind of thing. That just kind of gave me the belief back in myself. He was acting like nothing had even happened, like it was going to be like all the other years where when we travelled, we would room together. It was stuff like that. My teammates, my family, my girlfriend, my friends – like everyone was super positive all the time and never really gave me the chance to doubt myself.

Q: SO AS THIS SEASON HAS PROGRESSED DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOUR CONFIDENCE HAS CONTINUED TO GROW?

A: Maybe a little bit, I feel like I'm a fairly confident guy in the first place. I feel like my confidence grows a little bit whenever I see other teams' coaches kind of getting a little anxious when I come to the plate. Stuff like that, seeing kind of a game plan geared towards me. I feel like that's given me confidence more than anything. Because playing with Braden Shewmake my first two years he, like he was that guy where other teams never wanted to pitch to him, that kind of thing. I mean he always did so well with it. I learned a lot from him. To never let another team really know that, even if they are pitching you well, never let them know that they are. It's your fault not them, getting you out, your getting yourself out, that kind of thing. I mean, I learned a lot from Braden Shewmake on how to carry myself in these kind of situations.





Q: SO WALK ME THROUGH THE GRAND SLAM AT BAT VS OLE MISS IN GAME 3. YOU HAD TWO STRIKES ON YOU, WERE YOU LOOKING FOR FASTBALL UP IN THE ZONE?

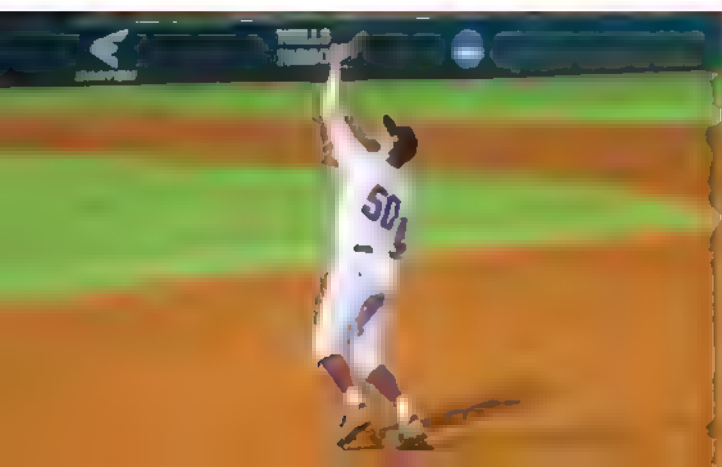
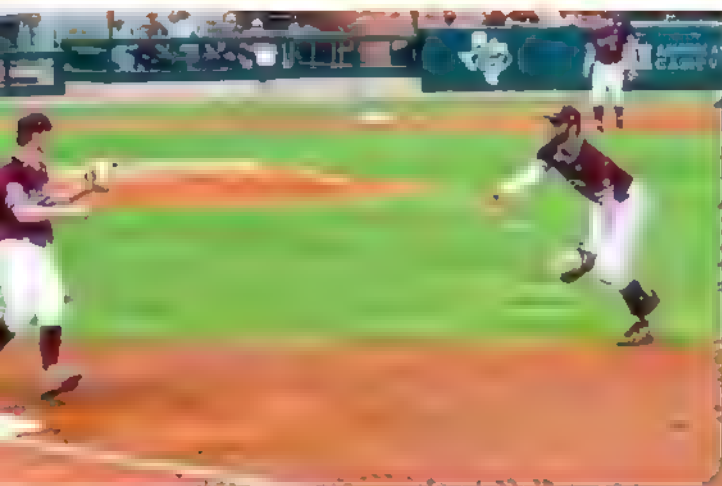
A: It was a weird at bat for sure. Chandler is actually really good friends with Taylor Broadway, and we had hung out a little bit in the fall. So I knew him. I was looking at the scouting report and saw that he had a really good fastball. I didn't think I was really going to get a fastball at that at bat. But after Ray and Sartori had two great at bats, they didn't really have anywhere to put me so then it was in my head like I'm going to get strikes. I don't think they are going to walk me right here. The first pitch of the at bat was by far the best pitch to hit and I just missed it. I fouled it straight back or into his glove. And then the second pitch I was late on a fastball, which I hadn't been all weekend. I felt like I was on time for every single fastball the whole weekend. And I was late to that one. And it was kind of in the back of my head kinda thinking, I know that they saw I was just late to that fastball, I think they are going to try and climb the ladder a little bit more right here and go up even higher. I wouldn't say I was sitting that pitch by any means, but it was definitely in my head that it could happen. And it just wound up playing out the way that I wanted it to.

Q: COMPARE THE TWO HOMERS IN GAME ONE AND GAME THREE, THE WALK-OFF AND THE GRAND SLAM.

A: The walk-off was a crazy moment for me because when we got in off defense Logan Britt and Ty Coleman, Coach Fox, just a bunch of guys jokingly like said "Why not end it right here?" that kind of thing. And of course that's what I'm thinking going up to the plate. I want to hit a homerun, but at the same time I want to get on base at the minimum to get this inning going. I wasn't looking for a slider in that at bat either, and he threw a slider first pitch. It's funny, the two coolest homeruns I think I hit this weekend were what we worked on during the week. I mean, I worked individually with Coach Caillet and Coach Pennington on kind of just barrel release on sliders and changeups and that worked out for the walk-off, and then we also worked on high fastballs and that worked out on the other one. So it was crazy how the two things we specifically worked on during the week ended up being huge for me. But the walk-off, I think that's my first ever walk-off homerun. I didn't really know what to do with myself as I was rounding the bases.

Q: NOT ONLY ARE YOU HAVING GREAT SUCCESS RIGHT NOW, BUT YOU ARE HAVING GREAT SUCCESS AGAINST SOME OF THE BEST TEAMS IN THE COUNTRY.

A: Yeah, I mean that's why I chose to come to Texas A&M. to play in the SEC and the best conference and to try to beat the best. And I think I've had a good amount of success in our conference this year and in the past as well. So that's a huge thing for me as well because I wanted to play against the best guys. There are definitely lows, but as long as you can have more highs during the season it all works out.



Q: TELL ME ABOUT THE RECRUITING PROCESS THAT BROUGHT YOU HERE.

A: Like I said I wanted to play in the SEC because I felt like every time I watched the College World Series, there were always SEC teams in it. It was always really fun to watch the SEC teams play because I thought they were always loaded with talent. Then when I got into middle school and high school, I started watching it even more, like watching the SEC Tournament religiously just to get a glimpse of how good all the teams were. Texas A&M was my first offer, and I committed on the spot because they are in Texas and in the SEC that's all I could ever want.

Q: HOW HAS IT BEEN, BEING AN AGGIE?

A: Oh it's been amazing. It was a big deal for me to graduate from this university. I did that in the fall. Got my Aggie Ring. Really glad to be a part of the Aggie Network. The atmosphere at our games: it's a little down this year with the COVID rules and everything, but there's nothing like Section 203 and all that they do. It's just a great atmosphere to be in. I've had some great teammates to play with, great coaches. It's been a blessing to be at this great university.

Q: WAS LAST WEEKEND YOUR GREATEST MOMENT OF BEING AN AGGIE?

Uhm, I would think so yes.

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR FAMILY'S REACTION?

A: My dad, I don't think he stopped smiling until ... he might still be smiling. He was just ecstatic. My mom was the exact same way. My mom was just going crazy yelling, just so happy. My dad was in shock about everything. Ole Miss had beaten up on us so many times in the last few years. It was definitely one that a few of us older guys had marked on the calendar. Every time we play them, it was like a one run game. It just seemed to be going on their side more often than not. For us to win two one-run games was huge for us.

Q: WAS THAT A NICE MOTHER'S DAY PRESENT FOR YOUR MOM?

A: Yes. I told her I was going to give her flowers after the game and she said I didn't need to (laughs).

Q: IS THE GOAL TO GO PLAY PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL?

A: That's always been a goal of mine for sure, is to play professional baseball but it's really wherever the future takes me. I love the game of baseball and want to play it as long as I can.

Q: HAVE YOU SPOKEN TO AGGIE TEAMMATES THAT ARE PLAYING PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL TO GET THEIR ADVICE?

A: Yeah I lived with Christian Roa all through college and I still keep in touch with him. And now I live with John Doxakis' little brother Jacob so I've kept in touch with John as well. Braden Shewmake, we always keep in touch and he's just a great guy to pick his mind about baseball whenever, really just talk to,

he's just a great guy. There's just been so many I'm going to be a groomsman in Zach DeLoach's wedding in the fall. It's great catching up with those guys. I feel like we don't talk as much about baseball as we talk about what's going on in our lives. We've had so many memories in baseball together that we would rather just talk about the funny stuff that happens in between.

Q: ANYTHING ELSE THAT HAPPENED DURING YOUR TIME AT A&M NOT RELATED TO BASEBALL THAT MADE YOU PROUD TO BE AN AGGIE?

A: Walking the stage in December that made me really proud to be an Aggie. Just seeing everybody, all the students, parents and how proud my parents were of me whenever I did it, my family. Getting my Aggie ring, I didn't get to have a Ring Day because of Corona, it just got sent to me. But it really meant a lot to me when I got that. ■



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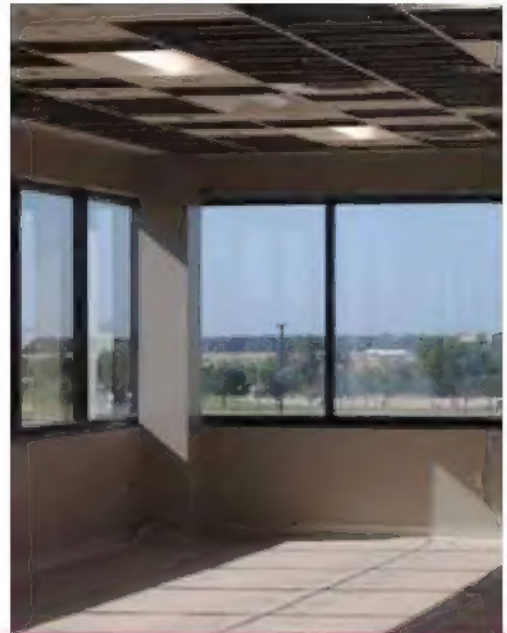
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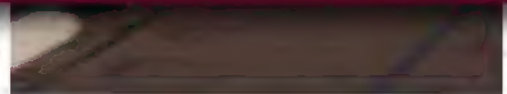
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